

BLOFIELD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH for the year 1899.

To the Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Blofield Rural District Council:-

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen:-

I beg to submit to you a Report on the health and sanitary condition of your District for the year 1899.

Population:-

Excluding the Asylum population, and basing my calculations on the average yearly increase of 30.2 during the decennial period 1882 - 91, I estimate the population in the middle of 1899 to be 11,496.

Births:-

The total number of births during the year was 285 (males 143 - females 142). The Birth-rate stands at 24.7. It is curious to note that, while in 1898 the number of females born exceeded that of males by one, in 1899 the balance of the sexes is exactly restored.

Deaths:-

The number of deaths registered was 139. In the Stn-Walsham Sub-District 71 and in the Blofield Sub-District 68.

This gives a Death-rate of 12.09; an exceedingly satisfactory record for a rural district and comparing favourably with the average death-rate the last eight years (15 per 1,000).

Infant Mortality.

Twenty three deaths of infants under one year were registered, which gives an infant mortality of only 80.7 per 1,000 births. Infant mortality is subject to sudden and great variations. In the year 1897 the rate was 171.1 to 1,000 births, or more than double that of the past year. While it is impossible to account for the singular immunity from death of the 1899 infants it is a pleasure to record the fact.

Old Age Mortality:-

Deaths registered at ages over 65 numbered 63, or 45 per cent of deaths at all ages. Senile decay is not an uncommon cause of death in your district. Twenty-nine deaths occurred at 80 yrs. and upwards, while three persons reached 90 years - the record age being 95.

ZYMOTIC DISEASE

The following table show the nature and locality of Zymotic disease notified during the year, and the number of fatal cases.

Locality.	Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever	Puerperal Fever.	Totals
Upton		1		1	1	3
Stn. Walsham		1		11		12
Reedham		1	16	1		18

Locality.	Typhoid Fever.	Erysipelas.	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever	Puerperal Fever.	Totals.
Thorpe	1			5		6
Nth. Burlingham			3	4		7
Little Plumstead				5		5
Hanworth				2		2
Woodbastwick				1		1
Ditton				1		1
Suckenham		1				1
Bradeston		1				1
Moulton		1				1
Asylum	4	1				5
Lingwood	1		1			2
Acle			2			2
Beighton			4			4
Brundall			1			1
Blofield			4			4
Halvergate			1			1
Strumpshaw			3			3
Totals	6	2	35	31	1	80

Table showing fatal cases of Zymotic Disease

	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Typhoid	Puerperal Fever
South Walsham Sub-district	1	6		1
Blofield Sub-district		2	1	
Thorpe St Andrew	1	3	1	1

Scarlet Fever.

Thirty-one notifications were received and one death was registered as due to this malady. It will be noticed from Table I that a large proportion (eleven cases) were reported from South Walsham, but only two families were affected in this village and there was no evidence of infection having been conveyed from the one to the other.

Diphtheria:-

The District has suffered somewhat severely during the past year from Diphtheria. The number of notifications received was thirty-five, and eight deaths were registered.

In the early part of the year two children suffering from Diphtheria were brought from outside the District to Beighton; the disease fortunately did not spread beyond the one cottage, but three deaths, including the two children originally affected, resulted.

In July Reedham was visited in a similar manner. Here three sick children were sent from outside the District to be nursed by their grandmother but owing to no medical advice being obtained, the nature of their illness was not discovered until a week afterwards. Two of these children died, and the infection spread to

others. The type of disease imported was malignant and although only a total of sixteen cases were notified four deaths occurred. Some time must elapse before this parish can be considered free from infection. The inhabitants are, however, now most thoroughly alive to the awful character of this disease so that even slight cases are not likely to be overlooked. The locality of the remaining sporadic cases will be seen from the table. In many instances infection could be distinctly traced to outside sources.

TYPHOID FEVER :-

The District has been fortunate in being almost entirely free from this disease. In the previous year nineteen cases were recorded, but in the year under consideration only two cases were notified. As the absence of typhoid from a district is a very sure indication of its sanitary condition, the Council are to be congratulated on the freedom of their district during the past year from this disease. I am specially pleased to report that in Reedham, a village which has gained a somewhat evil reputation in this respect, no cases occurred.

PUERPERAL FEVER:-

I have to record one fatal case.

WHOOPING COUGH :-

Few cases occurred and no deaths were registered.

MEASLES:)

Until the close of the year the District was free from this disease. It then broke out in Beighton necessitating the school being closed. The epidemic was of short duration but spread to the neighbouring parish of Moulton. There were no fatal cases.

INFLUENZA:-

This complaint showed itself more or less throughout the year becoming more in evidence during the prevalence of cold damp weather

The Inspector reports the following nuisances dealt with during the year.

Foul drains	79
" cesspits	18
" Accumulations	15
Deficient privy accommodation	9
" water supply.	13
Polluted "	4
Overcrowding	3
Total	<u>141</u>

THORPE VILLAGE

Population -

Census 1891 1317 (without Asylum)
Annual rate of increase 10.4
Estimate for middle of 1899 1400

Births - 48	Birth-rate	34.2
Deaths - 12	Death-rate	8.5

This is a remarkably low death-rate being about half the usual death-rate of a rural district. It becomes still more remarkable when the cause of death and ages at which death took place are analysed.

Four deaths occurred among infants under one month

Two deaths occurred in middle life from drowning.

Six deaths, the remainder, were among persons of seventy years and upwards. Two deaths being registered at 86 years.

Were it safe to draw deductions from the experience of a single year it would appear that persons born and living in Thorpe who survived the first month of their existence and escaped the perils of the river would enjoy an average length of life of 79 years.

The zymotic death-rate again stands at zero.

The following table shows the estimated population, number of deaths, death-rate and zymotic death-rate for the past eight years.

Year	Population	No. of deaths	Death-rate	Zymotic death-rate
1892	1330	20	15.0	4.5
1893	1340	26	19.1	2.1
1894	1350	18	13.3	0.0
1895	1360	15	11.0	0.7
1896	1370	18	13.1	0.0
1897	1380	15	10.8	0.0
1898	1390	17	12.2	0.7
1899	1400	12	8.5	0.0

Infectious Disease

Five cases of Scarlet fever of a mild type were notified. Three dwellings were concerned and in no case did infection spread beyond the dwelling originally infected.

One case of Typhoid fever was notified. The patient made a rapid recovery. I personally inspected the cottage and its surroundings and found everything in a satisfactory sanitary condition. There was nothing to explain the origin of the case. Every precaution was taken to prevent the disease spreading.

The village was entirely free from Diphtheria.

County Asylum

It will be seen that four cases of typhoid were notified from this institution. It was suggested that the milk supply might have been contaminated through the utensils being rinsed with polluted water. I accordingly visited the dairy supplying the Asylum. The water now used for dairy purposes is derived from

a recently sunk Artesian well of great depth and is of undoubted purity. The dairy in other respects appeared to be conducted on sanitary principles.

VACCINATION

As at any moment it may become of supreme importance to know the position of the District with reference to its state of defence against an invasion of small pox, I append the following notes on vaccination for the past year.

SOUTH WALSHAM SUB-DISTRICT

Primary vaccinations under 1 year	118
" " over "	18
Exempted under "Conscience Clause"	7
Summonses	0

BLOFIELD SUB-DISTRICT

Primary vaccinations under 1 year	103
" " over 1 year	50 22
Exempted under Conscience Clause	12
Summonses	0

I have the honour to remain

Your obedient Servant

HERBERT H. BACK

